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To:

Subject:

Attachments:

Tom Croskrey

Monday, October 14, 2019 1:46 PM

Marilu Flores

Memo

Sheriff Hatcher Response2[235][239].docx

Marilu,

I have been asked by Sheriff Hatcher to send this memo to the Commissioners office to be read into the Commissioner's meeting on Tuesday the 15th. Lisa called Loretta this morning to ask about a proper procedure or protocol to have this read into the minutes. We have not heard back from her. I am sending it to you so that you have time today to review the letter and add it to the notes.

Thank you for your assistance,

Tom

COMMANDER TOM CROSKREY

Bureau of Corrections Commander

Benton County Sheriff's Office

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Commissioners,

During the Commissioner's meeting on October 8th Commissioner Delvin stated that he would like to revisit an earlier discussion to take over the Benton County Jail from the Sheriff's Office. You stated that your reason to revisit this discussion was largely due to the Jail's mental health service provider not having been paid since June of 2019. Commissioner Delvin also stated that this was due to me being "distracted" with my personal business. Your personal comments and this discussion about taking over the jail is simply an attack on me personally and an attack on the great men and women of my Department.

To blame me and my office for not paying the health services provider is a manipulation of facts and half-truths to support your personal agenda against me and the Sheriff's Office. I would like to present to all the commissioners that facts so that you all have a clear understanding that I have been working with several different work groups to create a "vehicle" to pay for the mental health services.

Earlier this year (around July) I was made aware that the funding source that pays for the mental health services in the jail was nearly depleted, this current contract/MOU has always resided in the Health deterrent (which is part of the Commissioner's office) not the Sheriff's Office. I have built one of the best mental health programs in the state for a correctional facility and was very concerned about its continued funding. I was also aware that within the Public Safety Sales Tax budget there is a line item that was created to pay for mental health services in the jail. This line was originally created to pay for mental health services that would be part of the Mental Health Wing that I was trying to create before Commissioner Delvin decided we did not need to move forward with the project. The mental health line item for the funds wasn't reallocated and remained in place in hopes that we could begin working on the much-needed facility to help treat the inmates suffering from mental health conditions.

To say that I have not been able to pay for these services is simply not true. I was officially made aware of this issue in an email from Kyle Sullivan on July 22nd. In his email Kyle lines, out the fund source and explained how that fund source was being depleted. The following day I sent Kyle's email to my command staff in the Bureau of Corrections. The Bureau of Corrections began researching the information and provided me with reports regarding services and costs. I forwarded this email outlining the funding problem to all three commissioners, I did not receive a reply. During this time, I know there were several discussions between Loretta (of the Commissioner's office) and Kyle about the funding issue and it was well known there were funds in our budget that could be used to pay for the services until a more permanent solution was identified.

In addition, On August 28th I brought this funding issue to the law and justice Council meeting. The agenda notes clearly shows that I conducted the meeting and explained to the Law and Justice Council the lengths that I have gone to create a mental health team to work with inmates who have mental

health concerns and to stabilize them while they remain in our custody. This topic is of high importance to me. During the meeting Josie Delvin asked if the already approved \$146,000.00 was enough to cover the positions that we needed. I explained that this was not enough and that we needed to supplemental funds in the Public Safety Sales Tax budget to sustain the mental health positions. I believe a Commissioner was present for the meeting and again was aware of the issue of funding.

Prior to the Law and Justice Council meeting that I held in August as stated I sent an email to all three commissioners. This email was sent on July 23rd and it explained that the fund source for the mental health services was being depleted. In this email I explained, "These mental health services are paramount to us." This email went unanswered by all three commissioners. So I think its disingenuous to act like I am distract from my responsibilities and there is a need for you to take the jail.

Commissioner Delvin, this fact pattern clearly demonstrates that I am not distracted. I have been working in a collaborative manner with several work county groups (for several months) to resolve the current issue. Your comments and reason for wanting to take control of the jail are clearly without merit because your office was aware and in fact in charge of the MOU and clearly and your office staff were clearly aware of the funding issue. We will continue to work with your staff and the Health Dept to get this issue resolved.

The Benton County Jail has is what other jails aspire to. My jail is what other agencies use as the template on how to operate. We are clearly one of the leading jails in Washington State and we are often visited by other jails for training purposes. I have been contacted by several media outlets running stories on different innovative programs that I have started within the jail. I have had commanders and staff from other jails taking tours to see how we operate so efficiently. We have recently hired numerous lateral Corrections Officers from other jails in Washington State and Oregon State. This doesn't happen by accident. It has been my experience that people don't leave their profession they leave their leadership. Our jail is considered one of the best and most progressive jails in the state and this is due to our leadership team and the commitment of the men and women that work at the jail.

Recently KOMO news came and filmed a sequel to the incredible story "Seattle is Dying" the intent of the sequel was to identify a community where they are successful had dealing with the opioid crises. They chose Benton County because of the innovative programs we have started in the jail specifically the MAT program. I know you were upset because they did not want to talk to the commissioner's office and expressed that in your email to me. I explained to you that this program was started by me using grants and did not have any to do with the commissioners office

In closing, for the commissioners to take over jail operations would be a mistake. This happens in a very small percent of the jails across Washington (I believe on 6 out of the 39 counties). There is a reason for this, Sheriff's Offices have a much better track record of running correctional facilities and that is an undisputed fact. There is not a single person in the Commissioners office that has any experience

running a jail and therefor it will lead to operational inefficiencies and poor decision making. Here are some examples:

1. Not completing the mental health wing that is so desperately needed after spending 450,000 for drawings
2. Putting a cap on the inmate population against my and the city's recommendations costing the tax payers of Benton County Millions in loss revenue and causing our citizens to pay more to house our local inmates.

I strongly urge you to do what is in the best interest of the tax payers of Benton County and not exploit or take advantage of this current situation for your own political gain. I realize I have challenged you in several areas such as, the ongoing need from a Mental Health wing that you stopped, the handling of the public safety tax funding, your engagement in the opioid crises facing our community, the need for a detox facility, and the need for adequate office space for the Sheriff's Office. Please don't let political or personal difference drive this decision, we need to do what is best for the our tax payers. I would ask you in earnest to reconsider moving in this direction it is not in the best interest of our community.

